

**SCOPING NOTICE**  
**DESOLATION FLATS NATURAL GAS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Rawlins Field Office**  
**Rock Springs Field Office**

**Description of Project**

Marathon Oil Company (Marathon) has notified the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Offices that Marathon and other operators, including EOG Resources, Inc, Tom Brown, Inc., Basin Exploration, Inc., Yates Petroleum Corporation, Questar Exploration and Production Company, Merit Energy Company, and Santa Fe Snyder Corporation, intend to drill additional exploration and development wells in and adjacent to the Willow Reservoir, Wedge, Mulligan Draw, Powder Mountain, Desolation Flats, Ruger, Dripping Rock, Cedar Chest, Triton, and Lookout Wash Units and the surrounding areas (collectively referred to as the Desolation Flats Area). The proposed Desolation Flats project area is generally located in Townships 13 through 16 North and Ranges 93 through 96 West in Carbon and Sweetwater Counties, Wyoming as shown on the attached Exhibit 1. The project area overlaps the Rawlins and Rock Springs Field Offices.

The Desolation Flats project area presently contains several active fields which are predominantly spaced at one well per section for drilling in the Almond Formation. In addition, this area contains several active Federal Units, some of which are subject to current drilling programs. The Desolation Flats Area has 68 active producing wells, with accompanying production-related facilities, roads, and pipelines.

The BLM has advised Marathon and the other operators that an environmental impact statement (EIS) of the proposed development project will be necessary.

For purposes of conducting an environmental analysis, Marathon and the other operators have indicated that an additional 385 wells at 361 well locations may be drilled in the Desolation Flats project area. Some of these wells may be classified as exploration or delineation wells because natural gas production potential has not been fully defined due to geological complexities. Where production potential is better known, wells would be classified as in-fill or development wells. Drilling is expected to last for approximately 20 years, with a life-of-project (LOP) of 30-50 years.

The Desolation Flats Area is currently accessed by an existing road network developed to service existing drilling and production activities. Marathon and the other operators anticipate that the drilling of any additional wells within the analysis area would require the construction of additional roads. The gas produced within the analysis area would be transported by existing pipelines and new pipelines including new gathering lines with tie-ins to existing interstate pipelines.

**Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents**

Great Divide Resource Management Plan (November 8, 1990) - The Great Divide Resource Management Plan (GDRMP) provides management direction for resources contained within the

Rawlins Field Office area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources, as stated in the GDRMP, is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. The proposed Desolation Flats development is in conformance with the GDRMP. The environmental analysis that will be prepared on the Desolation Flats proposal will incorporate appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the GDRMP.

Green River Resource Management Plan (approved August 8, 1997) - The Green River Resource Management Plan (GRRMP) provides management direction for resources contained within the Rock Springs Field Office area. The objective for management of oil and gas resources is to provide for leasing, exploration, and development of oil and gas while protecting other resource values. The proposed Desolation Flats project is in conformance with the GRRMP. The environmental analysis done for this project will incorporate appropriate decisions, terms, and conditions of use described in the GRRMP.

If during the environmental impact analysis it is found that the development project would not be in conformance with certain aspects of the Green River RMP, the data gathered for, and the analysis conducted in, the EIS for this project will provide the analytical basis to amend, update, or maintain the RMP accordingly.

#### Mulligan Draw Gas Field Project Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (September 1992)

The Record of Decision (ROD) authorized Celsius Energy Company to drill 45 natural gas wells on 640-acre spacing. The ROD conditioned approval upon protective measures set forth in the Celsius Energy Proposed Action and mitigation and monitoring measures specified in the EIS.

The Mulligan Draw project area is located within the proposed Desolation Flats project area boundary. The intent of including the Mulligan Draw area within the Desolation Flats project area as described by the operators is to determine the feasibility and environmental impacts of a drilling density greater than the authorized one-well per 640-acre spacing.

#### Dripping Rock Unit/Cedar Breaks Area Environmental Assessment and Decision Record

The 1985 Decision Record (DR) authorized Celsius Energy Company and other operators to drill a total of 58 natural gas wells on 640-acre spacing. The DR conditioned approval upon protective measures set forth in the EA and additional site-specific mitigation identified during the Application for Permit to Drill (APD) approval process.

The Dripping Rock Unit/Cedar Breaks project area also is located within the Desolation Flats project area boundary. The intent of including the Dripping Rock Unit/Cedar Breaks area within the Desolation Flats project area is to determine the feasibility and environmental impacts of a drilling density greater than the authorized one well per 640-acre spacing.

Use Authorizations - Use authorizations (i.e., rights-of-way, permits, etc.) for roads, powerlines, pipelines, and well site facilities would be processed through the BLM Application for Permit to Drill (APD) and Sundry Notice permitting process.

Lease Stipulations - Some leases within the proposed area include special stipulations on occupancy. These are in addition to the standard lease terms. These stipulations are designed to protect surface resources such as soils, water, and wildlife by restricting periods of activity and areas of disturbance. Application of these lease stipulations will be handled on a case-by-case basis for each APD submitted to the BLM.

## **National Environmental Policy Act Compliance**

On reviewing the Operator's proposal, the BLM has determined that permitting this project would constitute a major federal action that could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Pursuant to NEPA and Council on Environmental Quality regulations on implementing NEPA, the BLM is preparing an EIS that will describe and evaluate the probable impacts of the Desolation Flats Proposed Action and alternatives. The purpose of an EIS is to provide the public and decision-makers with sufficient information to understand the environmental consequences of the proposal and to identify and develop appropriate mitigation measures to minimize environmental impacts.

One element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to:

- ! identify reasonable development alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS;
- ! identify environmental/socio-economic issues of concern related to the proposed project; and
- ! determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the EIS.

Additionally, NEPA requires that a "no action" alternative be considered in all environmental documents. This will allow a comparison of the economic and environmental consequences of the proposed and alternative development levels versus current development levels and existing environmental conditions. Under the No Action Alternative, no further natural gas development would occur on federal lands in the project area beyond that which has already been approved by the Mulligan Draw Gas Field Project EIS/ROD or the Dripping Rock EA/DR. This assumption, however, does not mean denial of natural gas exploration or development in the area, since all federal lands within the project area have been leased for oil and gas production or are available for lease and the area is identified as suitable for gas production in the Green River and Great Divide Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

This scoping statement has been prepared to enable government agencies, the general public, and other interested parties to participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

## **Identified Resource Management Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities**

The following issues and concerns have been identified by the BLM to date. It is not meant to be an all-inclusive list, but rather a starting point for public input and a means of identifying the resource disciplines needed to conduct the analysis.

- ! Potential impacts to wildlife habitats within the analysis area, including big game crucial winter range, sage grouse, and raptors.
- ! Road development, Increased traffic and associated impacts on existing County, State, and BLM roads. Road use designations (Rock Springs Field Office area).
- ! Social and economic impacts.
- ! Impacts to surface and groundwater resources, including sedimentation/salinity to the Colorado River system.
- ! Potential impacts to steep slopes and sensitive soils within the project area.
- ! Impacts from emissions resulting from additional drilling and production activities.
- ! Reclamation of disturbed areas and control of noxious weed invasions.
- ! Potential conflicts with livestock management operations in the analysis area, including possible impacts to range improvements.
- ! Potential impacts to cultural and historical values within the analysis area.
- ! Potential impacts to Native American sacred sites and Traditional Cultural Properties
- ! Potential impact to listed, or proposed for listing, plant and animal species, including potential Colorado River depletion and effects of downstream listed fish species.
- ! Cumulative effects of drilling and development activities when combined with other ongoing and proposed developments on lands adjacent to the Desolation Flats project area.
- ! Impacts to recreation.
- ! Potential impacts to paleontological resources
- ! Impacts to Adobe Town Wild Horse Herd Management Area.
- ! Visual Resource Management and potential impact to the Adobe Town Wilderness Study Area (WSA).
- ! Monument Valley Management Area (Rock Springs Field Office area).

### **Interim Drilling Activities**

While the Desolation Flats environmental analysis is being conducted, the BLM will allow limited drilling of exploration, delineation/confirmation wells within the proposed project area. Interim drilling will be monitored by the BLM to ensure activities do no significantly affect the environment or prejudice the completion of the Desolation Flats environmental analysis.

## Timing Needs or Requirements

Public input is important in establishing the level and scope of the analysis. The public is encouraged to participate during the scoping process to help identify the scope of the analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigative opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your comments are due by June 23, 2000

Please submit your comments to:

Address: John Spehar, Project Manager  
BLM - Rawlins Field Office  
1300 North Third Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-4376

Email: [rawlins\\_wymail@blm.gov](mailto:rawlins_wymail@blm.gov) (Please refer to Desolation Flats  
in your email response)

Public meetings to discuss the proposed project are scheduled for 7:00 p.m., June 7 and 8, 2000 at the following locations.

June 7, 2000 in Rock Springs, Wyoming:

June 8, 2000 in Rawlins, Wyoming

Bureau of Land Management  
Rock Springs Field Office  
280 Highway 191 North  
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Bureau of Land Management  
Rawlins Field Office  
1300 North Third Street  
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301

## Public Participation

The following individuals and organizations will receive a copy of this scoping statement:

### **FEDERAL OFFICES**

U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
Rock Springs Field Office  
BLM Wyoming State Office  
U.S. Representative Barbara Cubin  
U.S. Senator Mike Enzi  
U.S. Senator Craig Thomas  
U.S. Natural Resource Conservation  
Service

U.S. Army of Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Forest Service  
U.S. Department. of Energy  
U.S. DOI Office of the Solicitor

### **STATE AGENCIES**

Governor Jim Geringer  
State Engineer's Office  
State Senators  
Wyoming Department of Environmental  
Quality  
Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office  
Wyoming Business Council  
Little Snake Conservation District

Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
State Representatives  
Wyoming State Planning Coordinator  
Wyoming Department of Transportation  
Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation  
Commission  
Wyoming Department. of Agriculture

### **COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Carbon County Commissioners  
Sweetwater County Commissioners

Carbon County Planning Commission  
Sweetwater County Planning Commission

### **MUNICIPALITIES**

Mayor-Baggs  
Mayor-Rawlins  
Mayor-Green River

Mayor-Wamsutter  
Mayor-Rock Springs  
Mayor-Superior

### **NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES**

Northern Arapahoe Tribal Council  
Ute Mountain Tribe  
Shoshone-Arapahoe Joint  
Tribal Council

Shoshone Tribal Council  
Ute Tribal Council  
Uinta-Ouray Tribal Council

### **GRAZING PERMITTEES**

Adams and Adams  
Andy Peroulis  
Purple Sage LLC  
Salisbury Livestock Company  
Mike Sheehan  
Eliza Solace  
Three Mill Iron Ranch  
Elza Eversole  
Big Sandy & Green River Lvstck Co.  
Blair and Hay Land & Lvstck Co.  
Crosson Ranches, Inc.  
Douglas Hamel  
Don Mines  
Mud Springs Livestock Company  
  
James W. Ramsay

George R. Evans  
John Peroulis and Sons  
Raftopoulos Brothers Livestock  
Smith Rancho  
Sheehan Ranches  
Stratton Sheep Company  
Rock Springs Grazing Association  
Martin Aimone  
John C. Wilde  
William Bonomo  
Robert Gamble  
John W. Hofeldt  
Donald Moon  
Quarter Circle Three Bar Ranch,  
LCC  
Sage Creek Ranch, LCC

William Thoman  
Don Vercimak

William Tripp  
Clark Weber

### **LEASE AND ROW HOLDERS**

Marathon Oil Company  
Merit Energy Company  
Sante Fe Snyder Corporation  
Tom Brown, Inc.  
BP Amoco  
Colorado Interstate Gas Company  
San Marco Petroleum  
Thomas Erickson  
Celsius Energy Company  
ABO Petroleum Corporation  
Andex Resources, LLC  
Aztex Gas and Oil Corporation  
Van K. Bullock  
Captiva Resources, Inc.  
Centennial Venture III, LLC  
CIG Exploration, Inc.  
CNG Producing Company  
John L. Cox  
Davis Oil Company  
Double Eagle Petroleum & Mining Company  
Energen Resources Corporation  
Margaret M. Farinholt  
Forcenergy, Inc.  
Gunlikson Petroleum, Inc.  
H. B. Hillman Trust  
HILR, Trust  
Hollis Oil and Gas Company  
Industrial Gas Service, Inc.  
William E. Jeffers  
K N Production Company  
Key Production Company, Inc.  
Lario Oil and Gas Company  
Liberty Petroleum Corporation  
Lyco Energy Corporation  
Markus Production, Inc.  
McCulliss Resources Company, Inc.  
W. A. Moncrief Jr.  
Mull Drilling Company  
Niwot Resources, LLC  
Northern Geophysical  
Odyssey Exploration, Inc.  
Don Parsons

EOG Resources, Inc.  
Basin Exploration, Inc.  
Questar Exploration and Production Co.  
Pennzoil Company  
Williams Gas Processing Company  
Westport Oil and Gas Company, Inc.  
Kerr-McGee  
Exxon USA  
Questar Pipeline Company  
Allen and Kirmse, Ltd.  
Armstrong Resources  
Big West Oil and Gas, Inc.  
Cabot Oil and Gas Corporation  
Cellular, Inc. Network  
Chevron USA Production Company  
Clayton William Energy  
Concho Resources, Inc.  
Coyote Oil and Gas  
Devon Energy Corporation  
Emerald Operating Company  
Enron Oil and Gas Company  
Fidelity Oil Holding  
Gundry-White D.  
William G. Helis Est.  
D. B. Hillman  
Carol Ann Hoffman  
HPC, Inc.  
Intrepid Production Company  
Journey's End, Inc.  
Kaisar-Francis Oil  
KLT Gas, Inc.  
Larry Barnes Petroleum  
Los Chicos  
Marico Exploration, Inc.  
J. H. Marshall II Trust  
Medallion Exploration  
William Moss  
MYCO Industries, Inc.  
North American Resources Co.  
Ocean Energy, Inc.  
OXY USA Company  
Pepco, Inc.

Phillips Petroleum Company

Plains Petroleum Operating Company  
Quantum Geophysical  
John B. Roden Jr.  
Samedan Oil Corporation  
San Marco Petroleum, Inc.  
Seagull Energy E & P, Inc.  
South Pass Resources, Inc.  
Stovall Oil Company  
Texaco Exploration and Production, Inc.  
Texas Eastern Skyline  
Tindall Operating Company  
Topaz Mineralogical  
Union Pacific Wyoming Gathering, Inc.  
Vegas Production Company  
Westport Oil and Gas Company, Inc.  
Windsor Oil and Gas, Inc.  
WYGAP  
Xeric Oil and Gas Corporation  
Lillie M. Yates Est.  
Apache Corporation  
Forest Oil Corporation  
ConWest Exploration (Delaware) Inc.  
W.A.. Moncrief Jr.  
IT Properties  
Corbin J. Robertson  
Roemer Oil Company  
Bar Gas LLC  
Irwin Rubenstein

Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc.  
Prima Exploration, Inc.  
Resources Strategies  
Sacramento Partners, LP  
Samson Resources Company  
Santa Fe Snyder Corporation  
Sharbro Oil, Ltd. Company  
Stanley Energy, Inc.  
T. H. McElvain Oil and Gas, Ltd.  
Texas Oil and Gas Corporation  
The Gary Williams Company  
Topanga, LLC  
True Oil Company  
Union Pacific Resources Company  
Veritas DGC Land, Inc.  
White Energy Corporation  
Arthur W. Winter Trust  
Wyoming Exploration, Ltd.  
Yates Petroleum Corporation  
Yates Drilling Company  
Alenco Oil and Gas (ND) Inc.  
John P. Strang  
H S Resources, Inc.  
Costilla Energy, Inc.  
John F. Sheridan O & G Properties  
Lamar B. Roemer  
Intrepid Oil and Gas LLC  
Merit Partners LP

### **LANDOWNERS**

All private landowners are included under one of the above categories.

### **LOCAL MEDIA**

Casper Star-Tribune  
Rock Springs Rocket Miner  
KGWC TV - Casper  
KRAI - Craig, Colorado  
KQSW/KRKK - Rock Springs  
KTWO - Casper  
KUWR - University of Wyoming  
Meeker Herald  
Craig Daily Press

Rawlins Daily Times  
Wyoming State Tribune/Eagle  
Green River Star  
KRAL - Rawlins  
KSIT - Rock Springs  
KTWO TV - Casper  
Northwest Colorado Daily News  
Rangely Times  
KMKX - Rock Springs



KUGR - Green River  
Channel 27 - Craig, Colorado

KYCS - Rock Springs

**OTHER AGENCIES, INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES, INDIVIDUALS, AND  
ORGANIZATIONS**

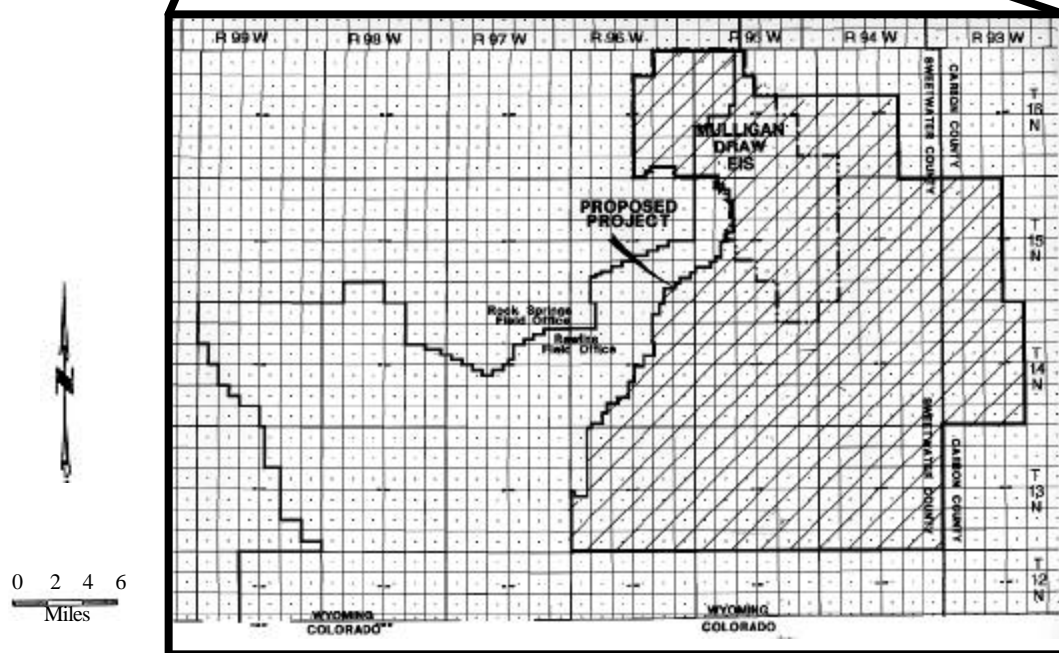
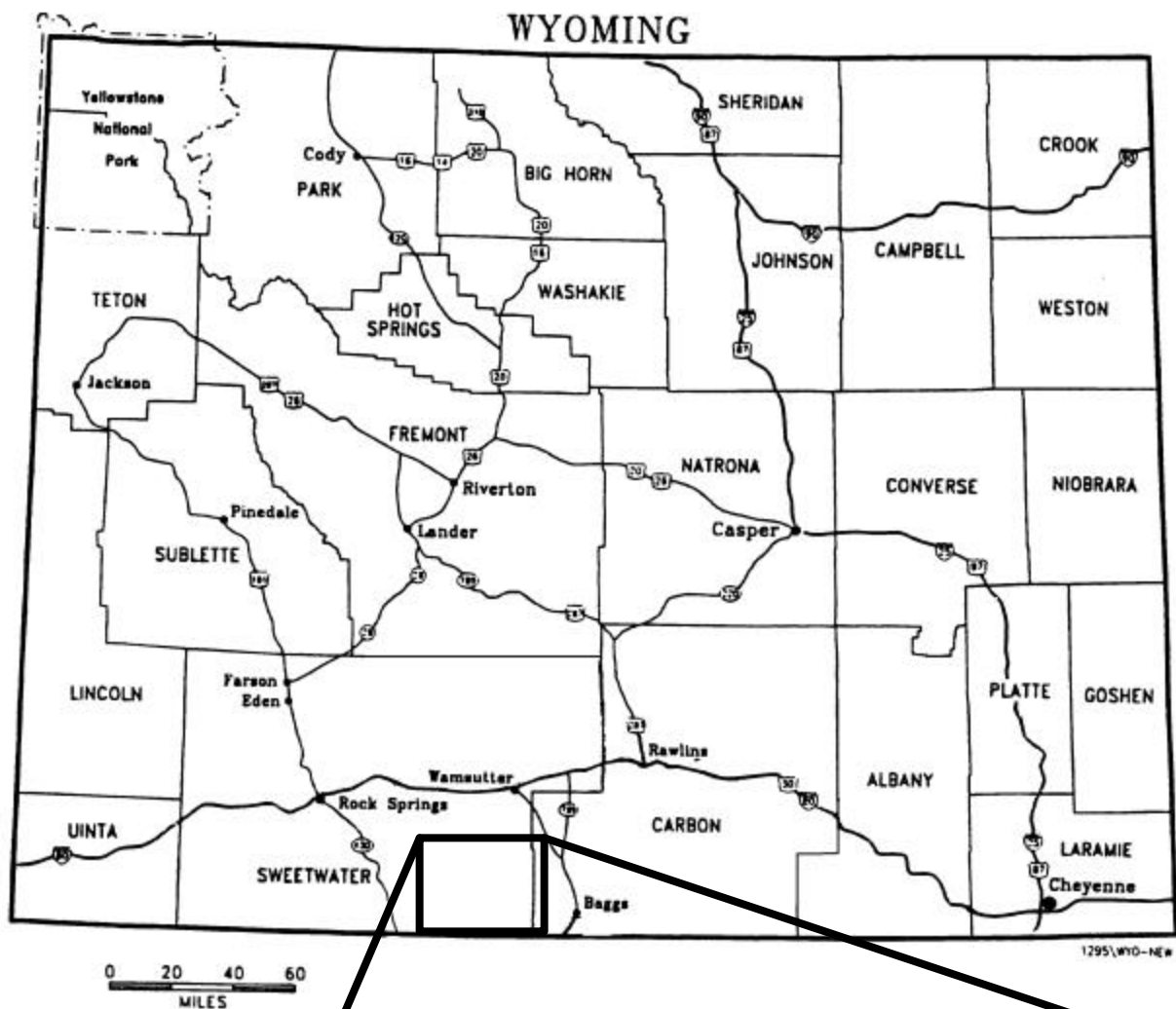
Audubon Society  
Wilderness Society  
The Nature Conservancy

Field Museum of Natural History  
Department of Geology  
Charmaine Delmatier  
Murie Audubon Society  
Petroleum Association of Wyoming  
Sierra Club  
Wyoming Outdoor Council  
Wyoming Stockgrowers Association  
Wyoming Woolgrowers Association  
Karen Larsen  
Wyoming State Grazing Board  
Kelly Crane  
Northwest Colo. Wild Horse Assoc.

Andrea Lococo  
ISPM & B  
Animal Protection Institute  
Biodiversity Associates-Friends of the Bow

National Wildlife Federation  
Carbon County Stockgrowers  
Wyoming Association of  
Professional Archeologists  
Wind River Multiple Use Advocates  
Independent Petroleum Association  
of Mountain States  
The Nature Conservancy  
Public Lands Advocacy  
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation  
Wyoming Public Lands Council  
Wyoming Wildlife Federation  
Dolar Oil Properties  
Barbara Parsons  
Sinapu  
Dr. Patricia M. Fazio  
Humane Equine Rescue and  
Development Society  
Wyoming Advocates for Animals  
Humane Society of United States,  
Gary Zakotnik  
Predator Project

Approximately 100 additional "Other Agencies, Industry Representatives, Individuals, and Organizations" received a copy of the Scoping Notice



General Location of the Desolation Flats Project, Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming 2000.